

law in Central Africa, what Bismarck calls the "undue nagging of the English" in all diplomatic relations, the notorious set of German policy in the council of Ambassadors at Constantinople, and above all the fashion in which England has been made to learn the real extent of German commercial rivalry, have all done their work: and now England and Germany alike realize the imminent probability of war. What Bismarck realized, and what we too may soon come to see, is that not only is there the most real conflict of interests between England and Germany, but that England is the only Great Power who could fight Germany without tremendous risk and without doubt of the issue. Her partners in the Triple Alliance would be useless against England: Austria, because she could do nothing; Italy, because she dare not lay herself open to attack by France. The growth of Germany's fleet has done no more than to make the blow of England fall on her more heavily. The ships would soon be at the bottom of the sea or in convoy to English ports; Hamburg and Bremen, the Kiel Canal and the Baltic ports would lie under the guns of England, waiting, until the indemnity were settled. Our work over, we need not even be at the pains to alter Bismarck's words to Ferry, and to say to France and Russia "Seek some compensation. Take inside Germany whatever you like: you can have it."

Against the approach of such a disaster to Germany and such a sure triumph for England, Bismarck sees no hope in the negotiations between France and Russia. "I fear all these efforts have been made quite in vain. A serious active working *entente*, with a very definite programme and a great deal of penetrating insight and tenacity, would be required to reach a result capable of moderating English pretensions. I am perfectly sure that Germany will not compass it." And again, "Certainly, it would be a very good time to recover the Suez Canal and Egypt from the English. But I do not believe that in France there is any passionate interest in this question. They are right there, perhaps, to wait for us Germans to become still more deeply involved in our foreign policy. For at present we have neither leadership nor principles, in fact nothing, nothing whatever. It is a case of general groping and waste of the stores of influence which I had accumulated." It was inevitable that England should have been the subject of discussion between the President and the Emperor: but, even under circumstances most favourable to Germany—that is to say, were Bismarck himself pulling the strings of Europe, there could have been only an attempt to moderate the pretensions of England. To this pass has the muddling of the German Emperor brought Germany, and at a time when England has awakened to what is alike inevitable and her best hope of prosperity. "Germaniam esse delendam."

combination, and hence we have had a revival of the healthier spirit of self-help which has distinguished the British workman above the workmen of all other nations. Nevertheless, the politician on the outlook for a cue will find much for reflection in the political resolutions. The Parliamentary adventurer has for a good while now found the Trades-Union Congress a happy hunting-ground. At a time when the moralist has ceased to have faith in moral suasion and is ever appealing for force to carry out his views, when the Temperance reformer has abandoned his operations upon the individual drunkard and commenced upon the Statesman, when the parent importunes the State to teach his child religion, and the priest with a light heart taxes his neighbour in the interests of doctrines which his neighbour abhors, it is not surprising that some workmen should desire to make their Unions a department of Government and to run the Legislature in the interests of their class. There is no such excuse for the political tide-waiter, who simply exploits the wretchedness which he pretends to be ready to cure, and hastens to accept for his own purposes crudities in legislation which are put forward in good faith, however mistakenly, by men who feel the pinch and are honestly desirous of lightening the burdens of the poor. The attitude of the politician towards the Congress is a chapter in itself, a mirror of character, a reflection of our times.

When the Congress was first established it was deemed the right thing to sneer at its existence and ridicule its resolutions. After the extension of the franchise had shown men and politicians that the workmen had become a prime factor in political affairs, the tone changed. The Congress soon became as much over-rated as it had been under-rated. Its decisions were regarded as if they had been a series of new revelations from heaven. No Pope ever had his decrees more respected among his followers than were the resolutions of the Trades-Union Congress among the newspapers which angled for popularity and the politicians who had the intention of becoming candidates for Parliament. The men who had been deemed unworthy of serious consideration became oracles, fitted to give the law to nations and mould the policy of parliaments. Their discussions, which had been treated as the outcome of untrained and ill-informed minds, suddenly became the chief study of Cabinet Ministers and the inspiration of party wire-pullers. Trades Unionism, which had been a reproach, now became a mark of honour and a proof of wisdom. All sorts of adventurers flocked round the new standard. Party programmes were elaborated in order to anticipate the half-formed wishes of the worker. Candidates with supple backs and flexible convictions vied with each other in promising adhesion to the new faith. One member of Parliament—whose firm has made an

